



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Blueprint developed to improve Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards

MADISON—State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster received final recommendations for revising and then implementing Model Academic Standards in English language arts and mathematics Wednesday during the Partnership for 21st Century Skills Best Practices Forum in Madison.

The recommendations represent the work of leadership and design teams made up of educators, legislators, parents, and business representatives who examined academic standards with an eye for increasing the rigor and relevance of what students should know and be able to do in English language arts and mathematics. Wisconsin's unique effort sought critique and guidance from two national groups to ensure that the standards revisions align with workplace and postsecondary expectations. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills—comprised of 37 members, including technology, media, and other companies plus education organizations—focuses on infusing broad learning, thinking, and life skills across all subject areas. The American Diploma Project of Achieve Inc., created by the nation's governors and business leaders, assists states in aligning their high school standards with national expectations.

"It is time for Wisconsin to revisit the model academic standards for English language arts and mathematics it adopted 10 years ago," Burmaster said. "These recommendations provide a blueprint for making revisions to our standards that will improve the transition of our students from high school to postsecondary education, work, and citizenship."

Revisions to Wisconsin's standards will target higher achievement by students. For mathematics, the recommendations call for encouraging students to study mathematics continuously through 12th grade and identifying core concepts requiring students' deeper understanding. For English language arts, the recommendations call for broader use of technology to access, evaluate, and present information while improving students' skills at analysis and written and oral communication.

(more)

In addition to revising Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards in English language arts and mathematics, the recommendations call for

- Identifying essential standards for classroom instruction and assessment, and developing grade-level expectations;
- Integrating 21st century skills and cross-curricular connections among disciplines;
- Aligning assessments with standards and developing a meaningful system of accountability that is comprehensive, varied, and authentic;
- Facilitating high school students' transition to postsecondary, credit-bearing coursework;
- Providing professional development and creating a portal of resources for teachers and those planning curriculum; and
- Involving postsecondary teacher education and content faculty with PK-12 educators in exploring the implications of revised standards.

"We started this project by listening to the business community, asking for input on the skills they would like to see in tomorrow's workforce. The combination of American Diploma Project and Partnership for 21st Century Skills viewpoints for this review of our current standards helped us examine the sequence and depth of content of our standards as well as the real-world application of that content," Burmaster noted. "Our goal is to increase the rigor and relevance of education for our students to pave the way for their success in our increasingly interconnected world."

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NOTE: This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2008_94.pdf.